DC
SUICIDE SQUAD
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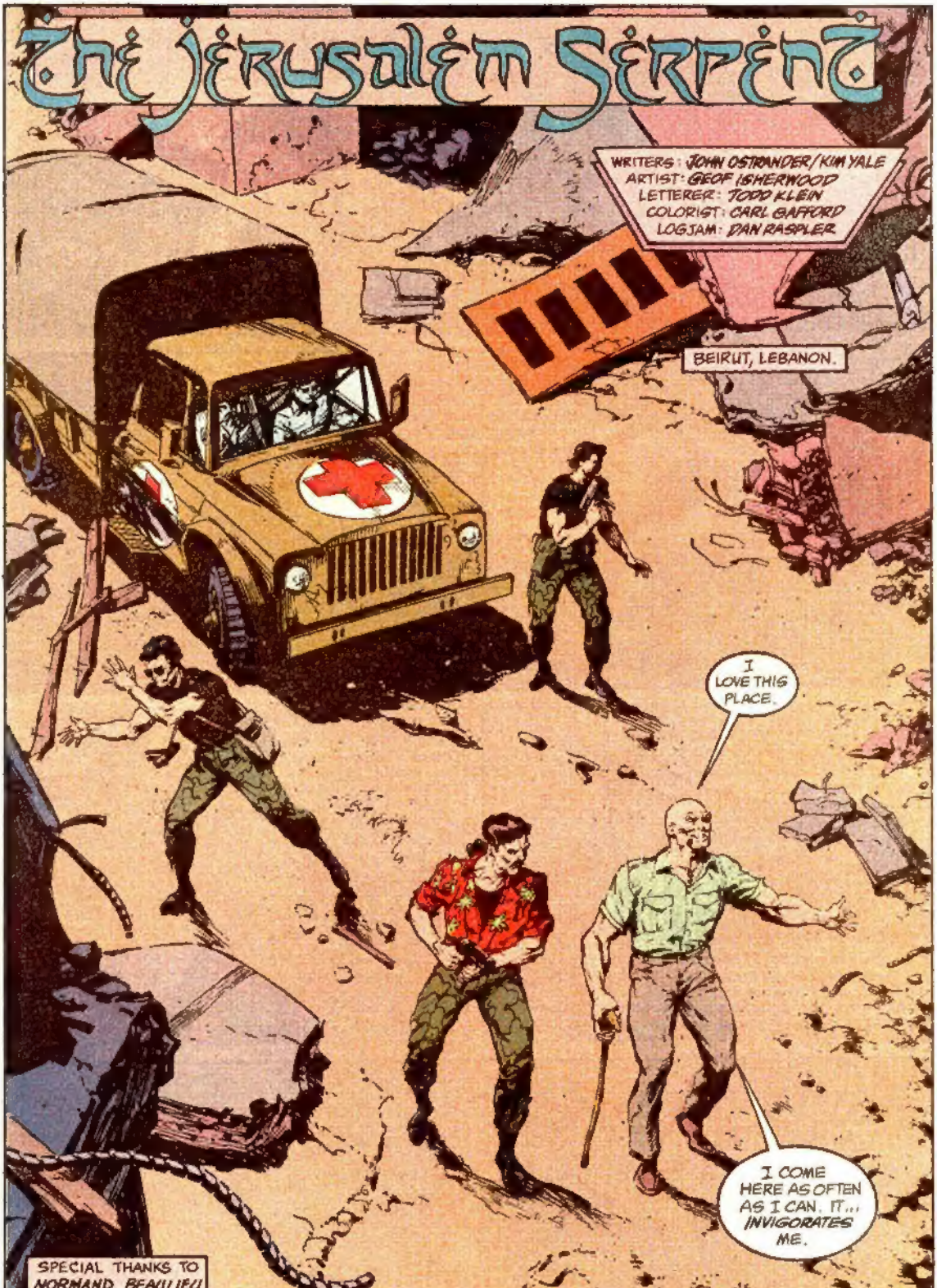
SUICIDE SQUAD
JOHN OSTRANDER
KIM YALE
GEOF ISHERWOOD
ISHERWOOD
SERPENT OF CHAOS



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I THINK THIS MOST APPROXIMATES MY CONCEPT OF WHAT THE KALI-YUGA -- THE AGE OF CHAOS -- WILL BE LIKE.

YOU WANT THE ENTIRE WORLD TO LOOK LIKE THIS?

WHAT I WANT -- WHAT YOU WANT -- IS IRRELEVANT. THE AGE OF CHAOS IS IMMINENT; THIS EPOCH MUST END IN BLOOD AND FIRE BEFORE THE AGE OF ORDER CAN ARRIVE AGAIN.

THIS PART OF THE CYCLE OF CREATION -- OF DEATH AND RE-BIRTH -- AND THOSE WHO OPPOSE IT ARE IDIOTS AND PETTY VILLAINS WHO UNDERSTAND NOTHING OF EXISTENCE.

WHETHER IT'S THE AGE OF ORDER OR THE AGE OF CHAOS, BUSINESS IS STILL BUSINESS. I'VE GOT THE GOODS -- DO YOU HAVE THE CURRENCY?

YES -- THE AMOUNT WE AGREED ON, WITH A SMALL BONUS. THE EFFICACY WITH WHICH YOU OBTAINED THESE NUCLEAR TRIGGERS IN SUCH A SHORT TIME PLEASES ME.

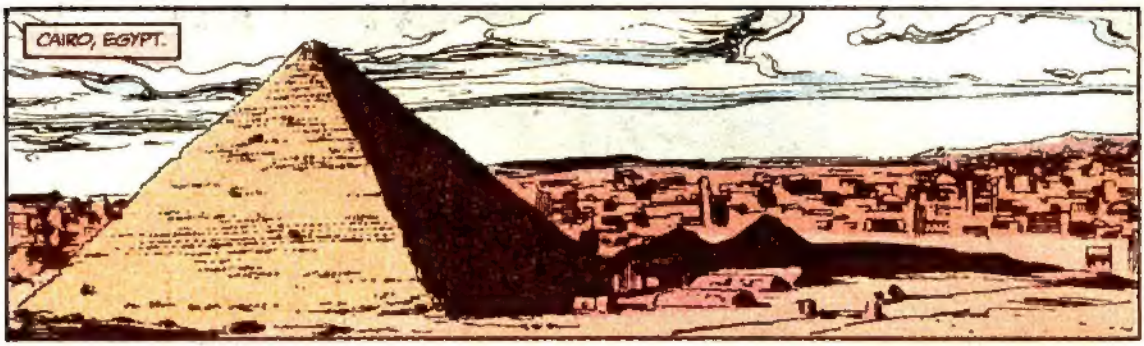
BOY, I LOVE RECEIVING COMPLIMENTS. TIME FOR ONE OF MY OWN -- THANK YOU, KOBRA, FOR ACCEPTING PAYMENT FOR NUCLEAR TRIGGERS FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

HANDS UP AND DROP THE CANE.

FOOLSSSSS!

DID YOU REALLY THINK I DID NOT KNOW WHAT YOU WERE? YOU ARE OUT OF YOUR JURISSSDICTION-- ASSS WELL ASSS YOUR DEPTH!

COMMENCE FIRING!



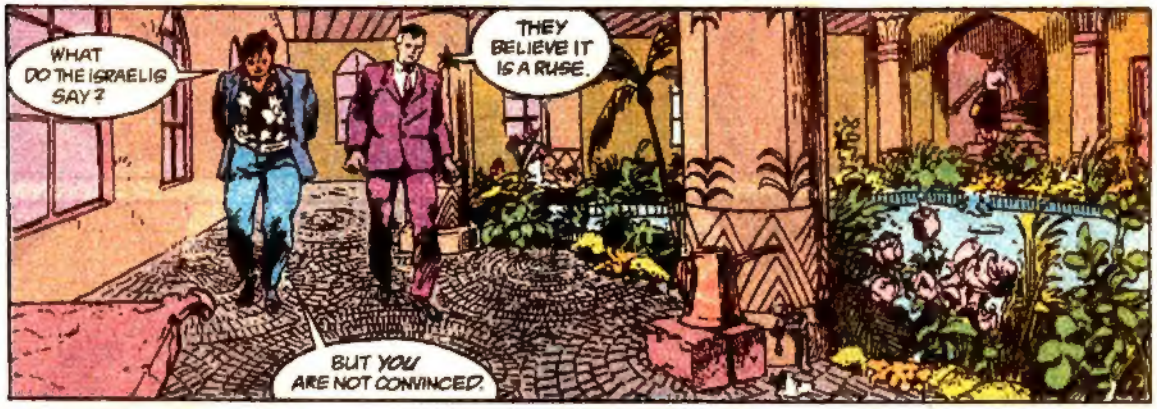
KOBRA THEN AMPUTATED THE MAN'S LIMBS, REMOVED HIS EYES, AND SENT HIM BACK TO THE AMERICANS.

MERCIFULLY, THE MAN DIED SHORTLY AFTER RELAYING THE MESSAGE.

AND WHAT WAS THE MESSAGE?

"THE AGE OF THE KALI-YUGA WILL DAWN IN JERUSALEM."

THE KALI-YUGA... THE AGE OF CHAOS. KOBRA'S TAKING THIS STUFF ABOUT BEING THE AVATAR OF THE LORDS OF CHAOS SERIOUSLY.
SO ARE THE AMERICANS, WHO PASSED THIS INFORMATION ON TO THE ISRAELIS, FROM WHOM WE... "LIBERATED"... THE INFORMATION IN TURN.


WHAT DO THE ISRAELIS SAY?
THEY BELIEVE IT IS A RUSE.
BUT YOU ARE NOT CONVINCED.

I THINK KOBRA FULLY INTENDS FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN IN JERUSALEM, MRS. WALLER.
AND YOU WANT TO HIRE THE SUICIDE SQUAD TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS AND STOP IT BEFORE IT HAPPENS.
WHY? WHY SHOULD YOU OR YOUR PEOPLE CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO JERUSALEM?

ALL THINGS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD ARE CONNECTED, INTERWOVEN WITH ONE ANOTHER. WHATEVER KOBRA IS PLANNING, IT CANNOT FAIL TO INVOLVE OUR PEOPLE.

WE HAVE NO WIGH FOR OUR OWN JUST GRIEVANCES WITH ISRAEL--YES, AND THEIR GRIEVANCES WITH US--TO BE USED AND MANIPULATED BY SOMEONE ELSE--ESPECIALLY IF IT'S A MADMAN LIKE THIS KOBRA.
OH. IT'S A PRIVATE FEUD. BUT WHY HIRE THE SQUAD? I KNOW YOU HAVE META-HUMANS OF YOUR OWN...

OUR MAMELUKES, YES. USING THEM IS ALWAYS PROBLEMATICAL, GIVEN OUR OWN FUNDAMENTALISTS WHO FIND SUCH BEINGS AN ABOMINATION.

HOWEVER, THE ISRAELIS KNOW WHO OUR MAMELUKES ARE, WHICH IS WHY WE FEEL THEIR PREGENCE IN ISRAEL MIGHT PLAY DIRECTLY INTO KOBRA'S HANDS.
THANK YOU

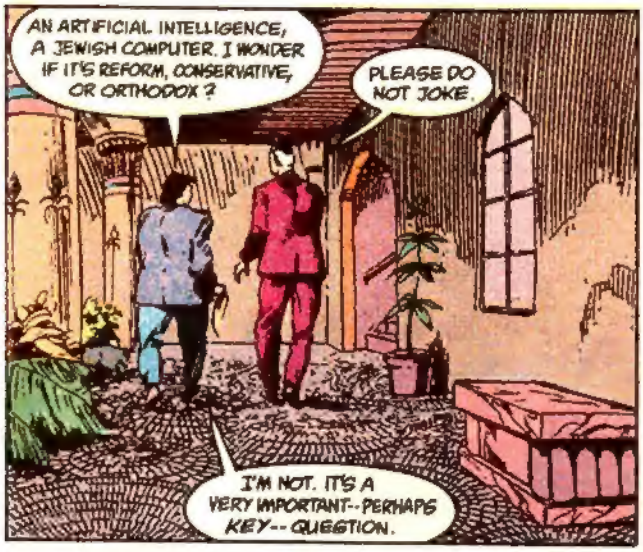
HMM--GOOD POINT. TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ISRAELI META-HUMANS.
UNFORTUNATELY, WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT THEM. THEY WORK FOR THE MOSSAD UNDER A GROUP NAME OF HAYOTH--THE FOUR LIVING BEASTS OF EZEKIEL AND REVELATION.
HAYOTH

MOYSHE NAKHMAN, CODENAMED GOLEM, SEEMS TO BE THE ONE HAYOTH MEMBER WITH META-HUMAN POWERS. AT WILL, HE CAN CHANGE THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF HIS BODY TO WATER, OIL, SAND, MUD, AND SO ON.

ALTHOUGH HE CAN ASSUME THE NATURE OF STONE, WOOD AND STEEL, HE RARELY DOES--LACK OF MOBILITY. AND HE BECOMES AIR ONLY IN CONFINED SPACES.
WE THEORIZE IF HE WAS DISPERSED IN THAT FORM, HE CAN'T MOLECULARLY COALESCE,

MY PEOPLE CAN'T FIGHT RUMORS, MR. NAZAIR. AND THAT'S ALL YOU'VE GOT HERE. A FEMALE ASSASSIN USING THE CODE-NAME JUDITH? AND A MAGICIAN CALLED RAMBAN? SOUNDS LIKE A SHEEP REPELLENT.
RAMBAN IS THE NAME OF ONE OF THE GREAT KABBALISTIC MAGES OF OLD AND, MRS. WALLER, IT WOULD BE WISE TO REMEMBER THAT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, RUMORS HAVE AN UNSETTLING WAY OF BECOMING FACT.

HUH. AND WHAT THE HELL IS THIS ONE? ALL I GOT IS A NAME--DYBBUK!
WE ARE GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THE ISRAELIS HAVE CREATED AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE--
--A SUPERCOMPUTER THAT HAS ACHIEVED AWARENESS, CODE-NAMED DYBBUK. MORE THAN THAT WE DO NOT KNOW.


AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, A JEWISH COMPUTER. I WONDER IF IT'S REFORM, CONSERVATIVE, OR ORTHODOX?
PLEASE DO NOT JOKE.
I'M NOT. IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT--PERHAPS KEY--QUESTION.

YOU KNOW THE TERMS. A MILLION UP FRONT, A FREE HAND, AND NO CONTACT.
BY ALL MEANS. AND IF YOU ARE CAUGHT, YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN. HOW SOON DO YOU BEGIN?

"IMMEDIATELY. THE CLOCK'S ALREADY TICKING WITH KOBRA.

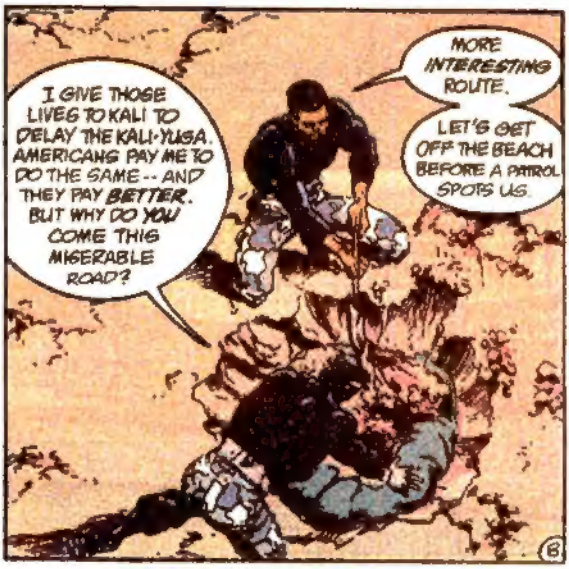
"AND, SO FAR, WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT SORT OF CHAOS HE PLANS OR HOW HE INTENDS TO GO ABOUT IT."

OFF THE ISRAELI COAST, SOMEWHERE NEAR TEL AVIV, A FEW DAYS LATER...
THEY'RE MOVING AWAY FROM US. GRAB AN OAR. LET'S GET TO SHORE.

MUCH OF A BOTHERATION. ARE WE NOT HERE TO HELP THIS COUNTRY? THE OTHERS ENTER IN A MOST CIVILIZED FASHION BUT WE MUST STEAL OUR WAY IN.

YOU WERE PART OF THE JIHAD -- WHICH MAKES YOU A TERRORIST AN'CERTAIN TO BE ON ISRAEL'S PROSCRIBED LIST. THEY'D NEVER LET YOU IN THE FRONT DOOR.
WE'RE ALMOST BEACHED. WE CAN PULL HER IN FROM HERE. LET'S GO.

I AM NO TERRORIST! I AM THUGEE! I WAS THUGEE BEFORE JIHAD; I AM THUGEE AFTER. I SIMPLY COMBINE THEOLOGY AND COMMERCE LIKE ANYOTHER RELIGION.
JIHAD PAID ME TO KILL.

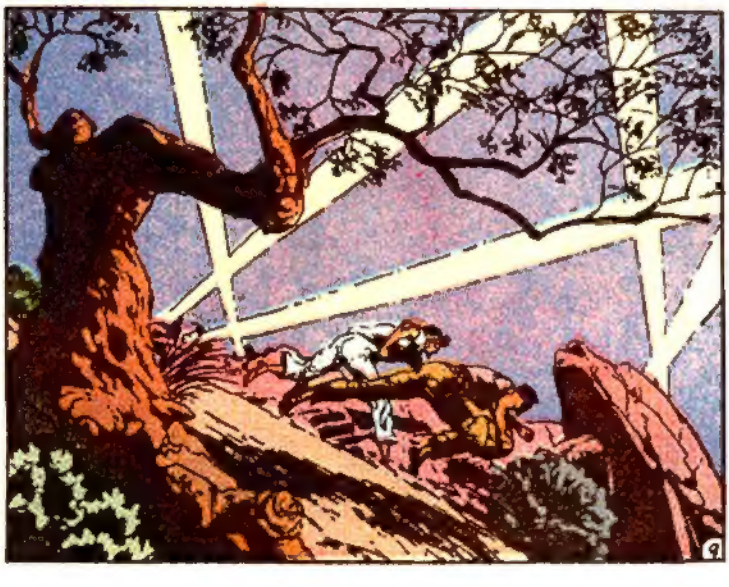

I GIVE THOSE LIVES TO KALI TO DELAY THE KALI-YUGA. AMERICANS PAY ME TO DO THE SAME -- AND THEY PAY BETTER. BUT WHY DO YOU COME THIS MISERABLE ROAD?
MORE INTERESTING ROUTE.
LET'S GET OFF THE BEACH BEFORE A PATROL SPOTS US.

THERE'S OUR DRESSING ROOM.

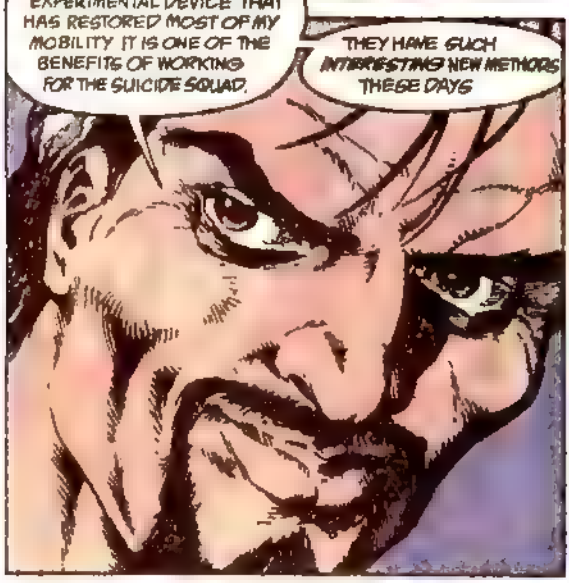
SO--YOU SIMPLY TRAVEL THIS ROUTE BECAUSE IT IS MORE "INTERESTING"?
I AM TOLD YOU SPENT PART OF THIG LAST YEAR AS A JANISSARY--ONE OF THESE META-HUMANS THE ARABS HIRE.

MAYBE YOU MAKE YOURSELF PERSONA NON GRATA IN ISRAEL, YES? SO YOU CANNOT COME IN THE FRONT DOOR ANY MORE THAN I?

PATROL COMING. LET'S SEE IF WE CAN MAKE THAT ROCK.



HOW'S THE BACK, RAVAN? YOU HEALED UP FROM WHERE I SNAPPED IT? DON'T SEE YOU WEARING THAT BRACE CONTRAPTION ANYMORE.


NOT TO WORRY. I NOW HAVE AN IMPLANT, AN EXPERIMENTAL DEVICE THAT HAS RESTORED MOST OF MY MOBILITY. IT IS ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF WORKING FOR THE SUICIDE SQUAD.
THEY HAVE SUCH INTERESTING NEW METHODS THESE DAYS

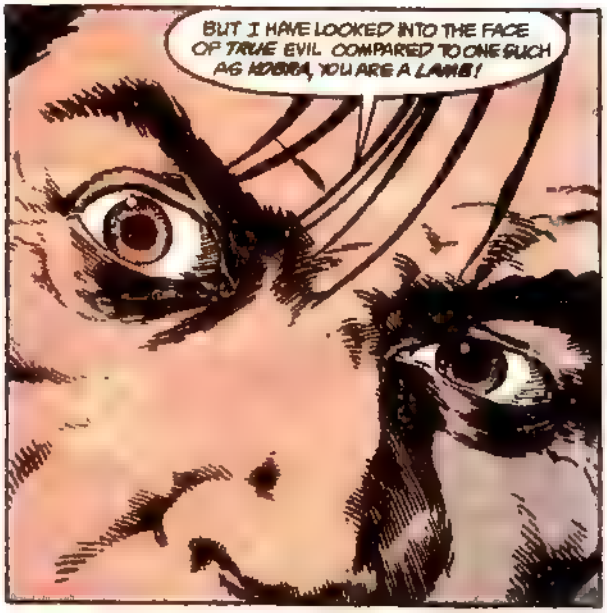
GLAD TO HEAR IT
YOU KNOW, I CAN STILL SEE THE MOMENT I DID IT. YOU WRITHING ON THE FLOOR, WARNING ME HOW YOU INTENDED TO KILL ME

I, TOO, CAN STILL REMEMBER IT
AND I WILL KILL YOU.

HOW ABOUT NOW?

HAHAHAHAHAHA!

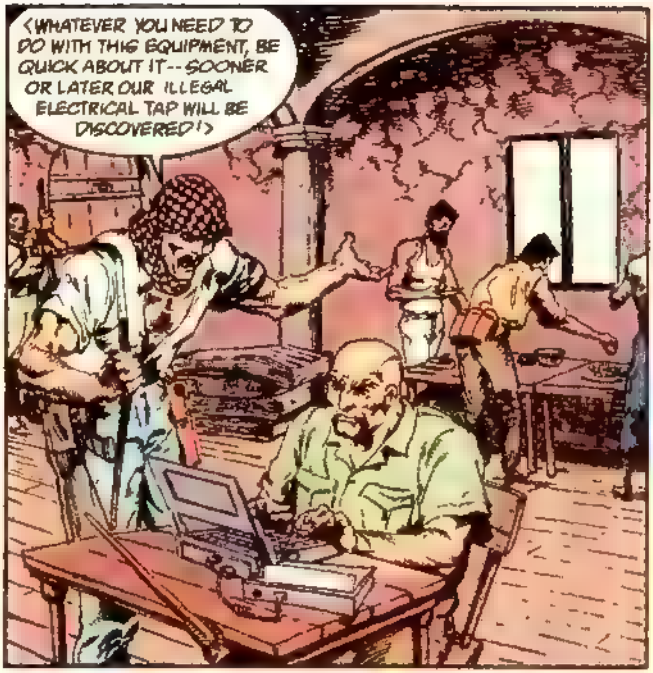
OH, POOR TIGER! TRYING TO CONVINCE OTHERS HOW EVIL A BEAST AT HEART HE REALLY IS


BUT I HAVE LOOKED INTO THE FACE OF TRUE EVIL COMPARED TO ONE SUCH AS HYDRA, YOU ARE A LAMB!

OH MY MUCH OF A FOOLISHNESS TO LAUGH OUT LOUD PATROLS MAY BE DRAWN AND WE HAVE MANY MILES TO TRAVEL AND NOT MUCH TIME
MY FRIENDS IN THE MUSLIM QUARTER IN THE OLD CITY WILL TAKE US IN-- BUT NOT IF WE BRING THE ISRAELI SOLDIERS WITH US! LET US LEAVE

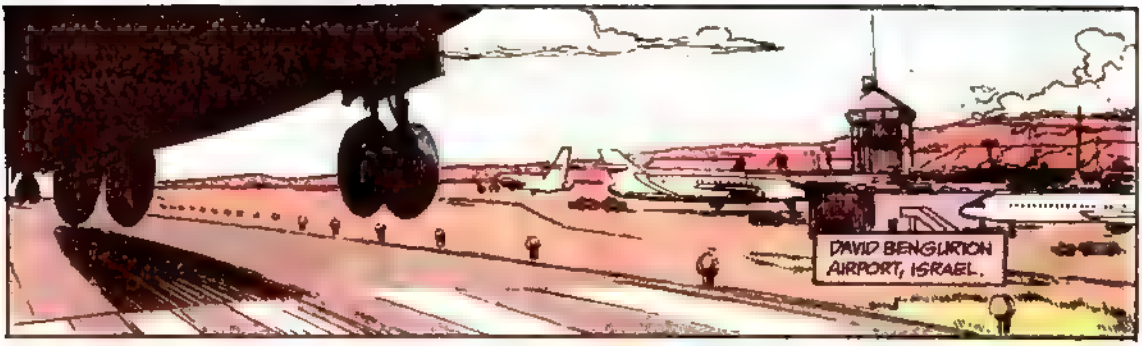
JERUSALEM, ISRAEL
THE MUSLIM QUARTER
OF THE OLD CITY

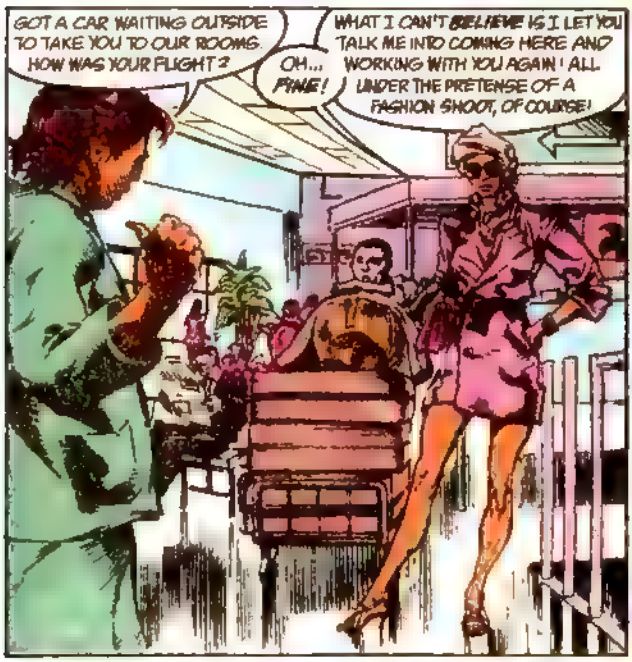
<THE GENERATOR IS OPERATIONAL>


<WHATEVER YOU NEED TO DO WITH THIS EQUIPMENT, BE QUICK ABOUT IT--SOONER OR LATER OUR ILLEGAL ELECTRICAL TAP WILL BE DISCOVERED!>

<I'D SAY SOONER.>
KLOP

THE SWORD OF ZION IS AMONG YOU!
BY THE INEFFABLE NAME!
MAY THE PATRIARCHS PROTECT ME!
WELCOME, HAYOTH.
I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK YOU WOULD NOT APPEAR


DAVID BENGURION AIRPORT, ISRAEL.


GOT A CAR WAITING OUTSIDE TO TAKE YOU TO OUR ROOMS. HOW WAS YOUR FLIGHT?
OH... FINE!
WHAT I CAN'T BELIEVE IS I LET YOU TALK ME INTO COMING HERE AND WORKING WITH YOU AGAIN! ALL UNDER THE PRETENSE OF A FASHION SHOOT, OF COURSE!

YOU WANT THE REAL REASON YOU LET YOURSELF BE TALKED INTO THIS OR THE OSTENSIBLE ONE?
OH, BE GENEROUS. DO GIVE ME BOTH. YOU WILL, ANYWAY.

THE MONEY YOU'RE MAKING ON THE LAST MISSION AND THIS ONE LETS YOU START BUYING OUT YOUR PARTNERS SO YOU CAN OWN YOUR FASHION HOUSE OUTRIGHT.
THAT'S THE OSTENSIBLE REASON THE REAL REASON IS--

NO! I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO SAY AND YOU'RE WRONG! I HAVE FINISHED WITH THAT MAN!
UH-HUH
BOOMERBUTT AND DEADSHOT WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THAT PLANE, TOO. THOSE TWO CHUMPS HAD BETTER HAVE A GOOD REASON FOR HAVING MISSED IT!

WHA'-- WHA' Y'MEAN THE BLOODY PLANE'S LEFT, YA BLOODY CHROMOS! IT CAN'T HAVE LEFT!

LOOK! I GOT A BLOODY TICKET! WHAT THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THIS, HEY?

15:45 TEL AVI

17.10 JERUSAL

I AM SORRY, SIR, BUT AS I HAVE EXPLAINED TO YOU, YOU'LL HAVE TO TALK WITH THE TICKET COUNTER!

HEY! HEY! Y'KNOW WHAT Y' CAN DO WI' THAT BLOODY TICKET COUNTER, DONCHER?

C'MON...

18

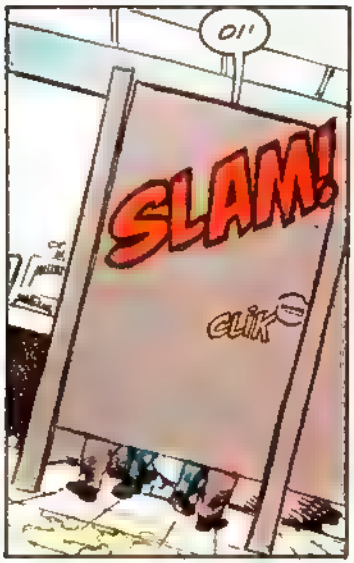
THE NERVE OF THAT MOB! STOP FOR A FEW BLOODY DRINKS AND THEY TAKE OFF WITHOUTCHER!

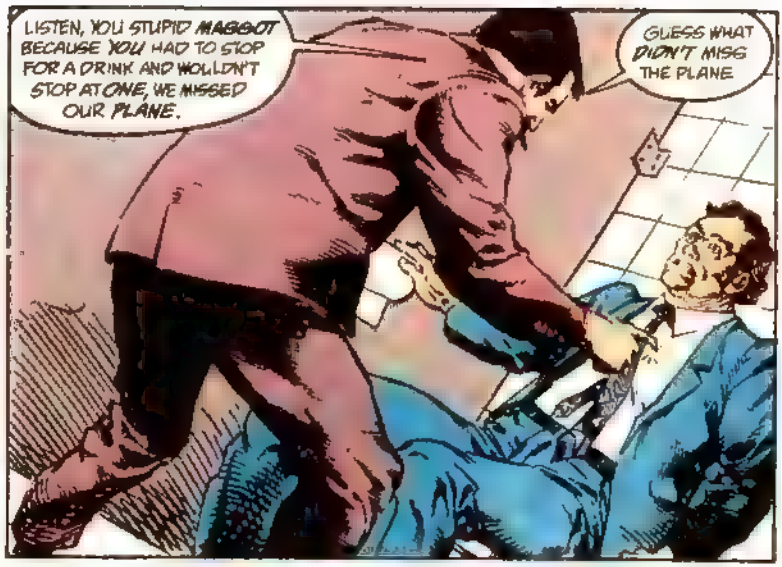
I TELL YA, MATE, THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY'S GONE STRAIGHT IN THE LOO SINCE DEREGULATION

18

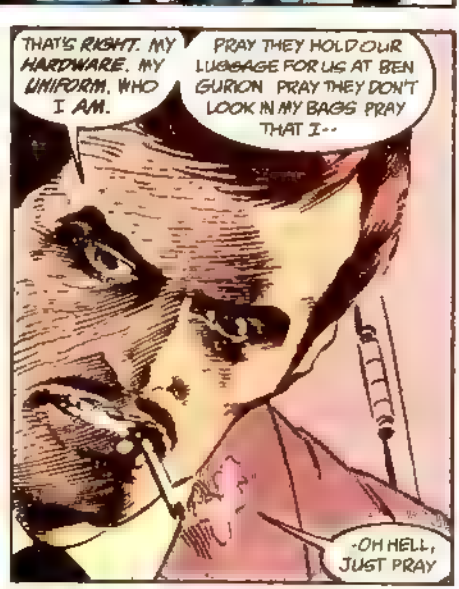
HEY, MATE! WHY DINCHER SAY YER WANTED THE USE OF TH' DUNNY. LOOK, I'LL WAIT OUTSIDE...

THUNK!


OI!
SLAM!
CLIK


LISTEN, YOU STUPID MAGGOT BECAUSE YOU HAD TO STOP FOR A DRINK AND WOULDN'T STOP AT ONE, WE MISSED OUR PLANE.
GUESS WHAT DIDN'T MISS THE PLANE

ERR .. OUR LUGGAGE?
RIGHT. NOW GUESS WHAT WAS IN MY LUGGAGE
OH BLOODY HELL!


THAT'S RIGHT. MY HARDWARE. MY UNIFORM. WHO I AM.
PRAY THEY HOLD OUR LUGGAGE FOR US AT BEN GURION PRAY THEY DON'T LOOK IN MY BAGS PRAY THAT I--
-OH HELL, JUST PRAY

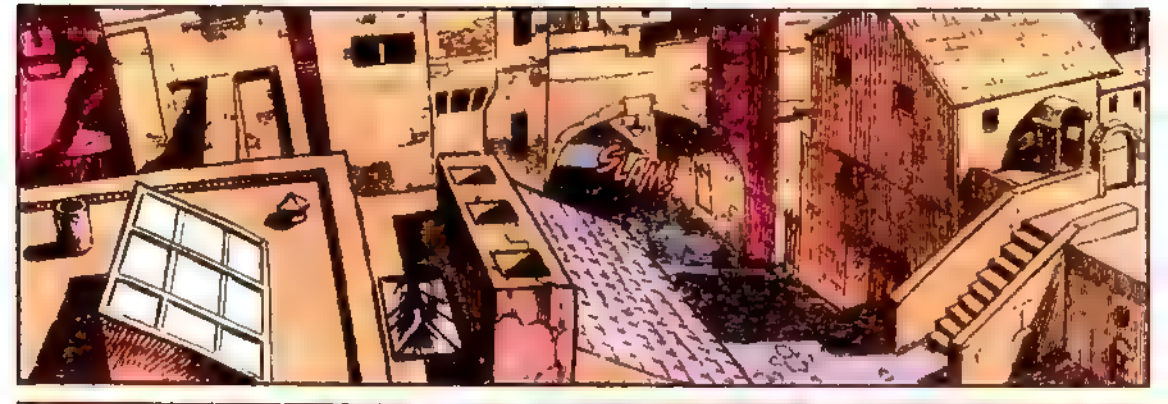
SLAM!

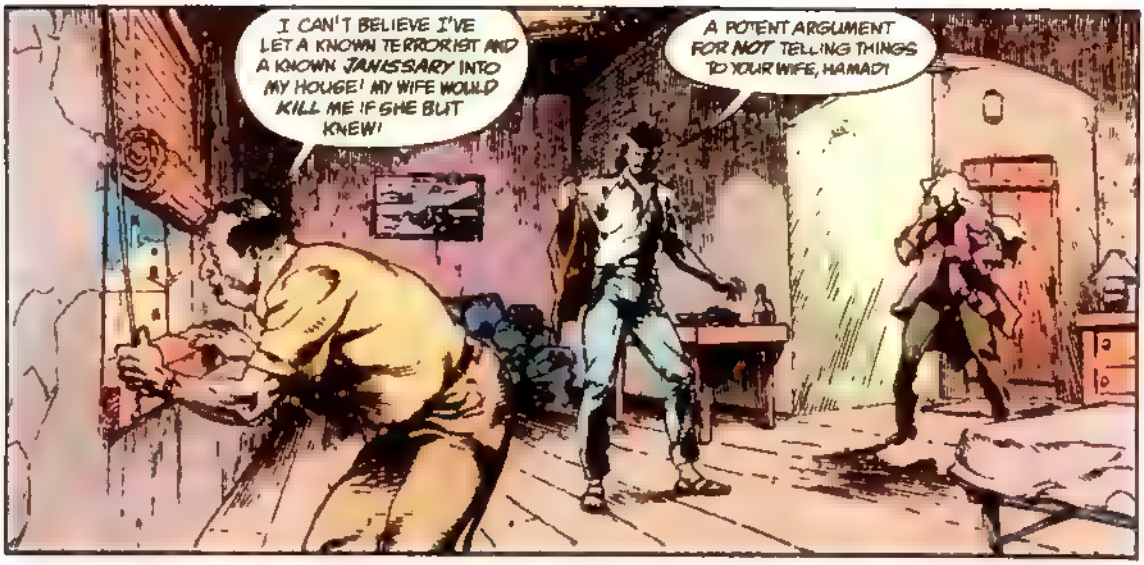
I'M A DEAD MAN

JERUSALEM. THE OLD CITY
THE MUSLIM QUARTER.

TAP TAP
HAMADI
AWAKE REMEMBER
RUSTAM

IN! IN, QUICKLY! THERE ARE
MANY EYES IN THE OLD CITY AND
NOT ALL ARE FRIENDLY!


SLAM


I CAN'T BELIEVE I'VE LET A KNOWN TERRORIST AND A KNOWN JANISSARY INTO MY HOUSE! MY WIFE WOULD KILL ME IF SHE BUT KNEW!
A POTENT ARGUMENT FOR NOT TELLING THINGS TO YOUR WIFE, HAMAD!

BESIDES, I AND MY COMPANION HAVE NEVER ACTED AGAINST ISRAEL ITSELF. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR

I AM CERTAIN THE MOSSAD WOULD MAKE THAT DISTINCTION!
THEY'VE ALREADY MADE ONE OPERATION AGAINST SUSPECTED TERRORISTS IN THE QUARTER TODAY!

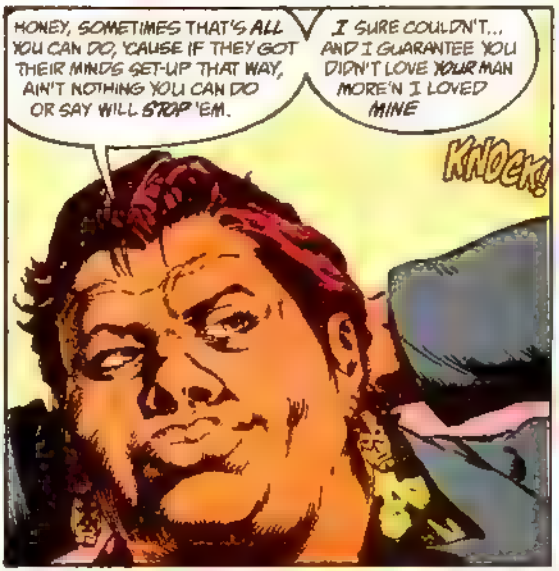
TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT IT, HAMAD!
B-B-BUT I ALREADY HAVE!
THEN GO OUT AND LEARN MORE. GO.

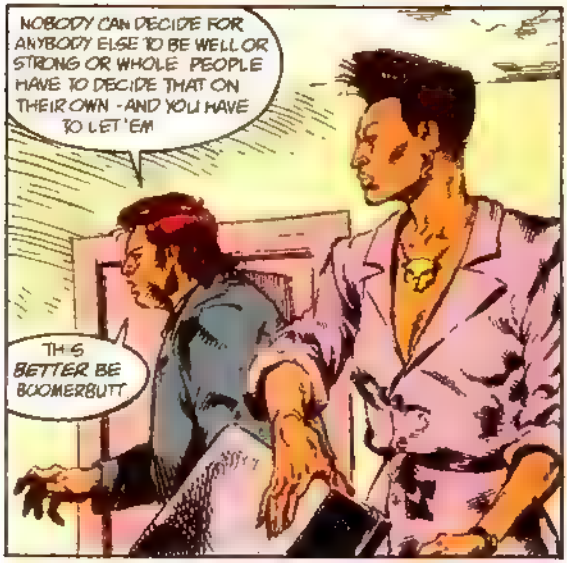
WHAT DO WE
WAIT UNTIL WE HEAR FROM WALLED. IF THE PLANS HAVE CHANGED, SHE'LL LET US KNOW

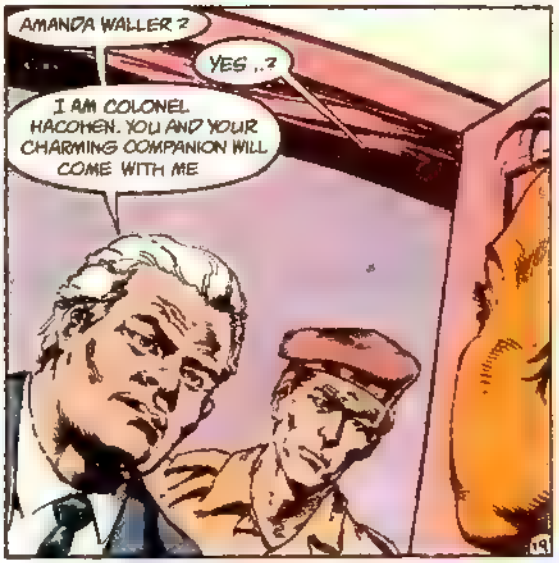
JERUSALEM A SHORT TIME LATER ..
HOTEL

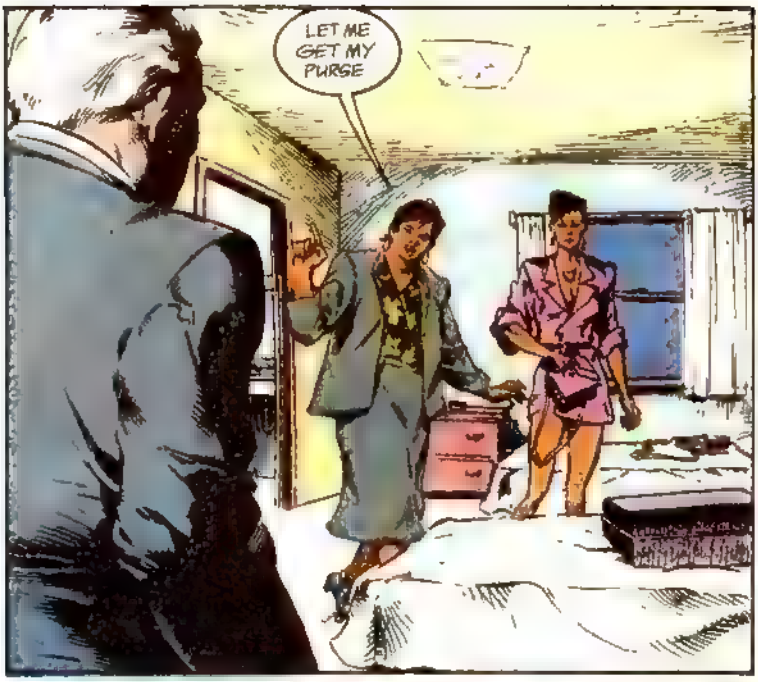
PALATIAL SURROUNDINGS, AMANDA NOTHING BUT THE BEST! I SWEAR, I DON'T KNOW WHY I BOTHER WITH YOU OR BEN "I-AM-SO-BAD" TURNER!
GIRL, YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE YOU STILL CARE ABOUT THE MAN, SO LET'S STOP WITH THAT DAMN FOOL GAME .
PROBLEM IS--YOU WANT BEN BACK AS HE WAS A YEAR AGO, AND THAT IMAGE WAS JUST AS FALSE AS THE ONE HE USES NOW

HOWEVER GOOD YOUR INTENTIONS MAY BE, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LEARN YOU CAN'T SAVE BEN
SO WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND, AMANDA-- JUST LETTING HIM KILL HIMSELF?

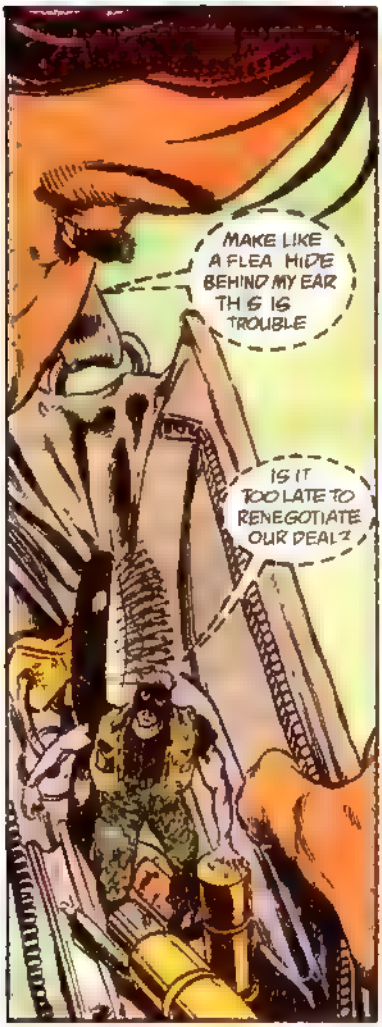

HONEY, SOMETIMES THAT'S ALL YOU CAN DO, 'CAUSE IF THEY GOT THEIR MINDS SET-UP THAT WAY, AIN'T NOTHING YOU CAN DO OR SAY WILL STOP 'EM.
I SURE COULDN'T... AND I GUARANTEE YOU DIDN'T LOVE YOUR MAN MORE'N I LOVED MINE
KNOCK


NOBODY CAN DECIDE FOR ANYBODY ELSE TO BE WELL OR STRONG OR WHOLE PEOPLE HAVE TO DECIDE THAT ON THEIR OWN -AND YOU HAVE TO LET 'EM
THIS BETTER BE BOOMERBUTT


AMANDA WALLER?
YES ..?
I AM COLONEL HACOHEN. YOU AND YOUR CHARMING COMPANION WILL COME WITH ME

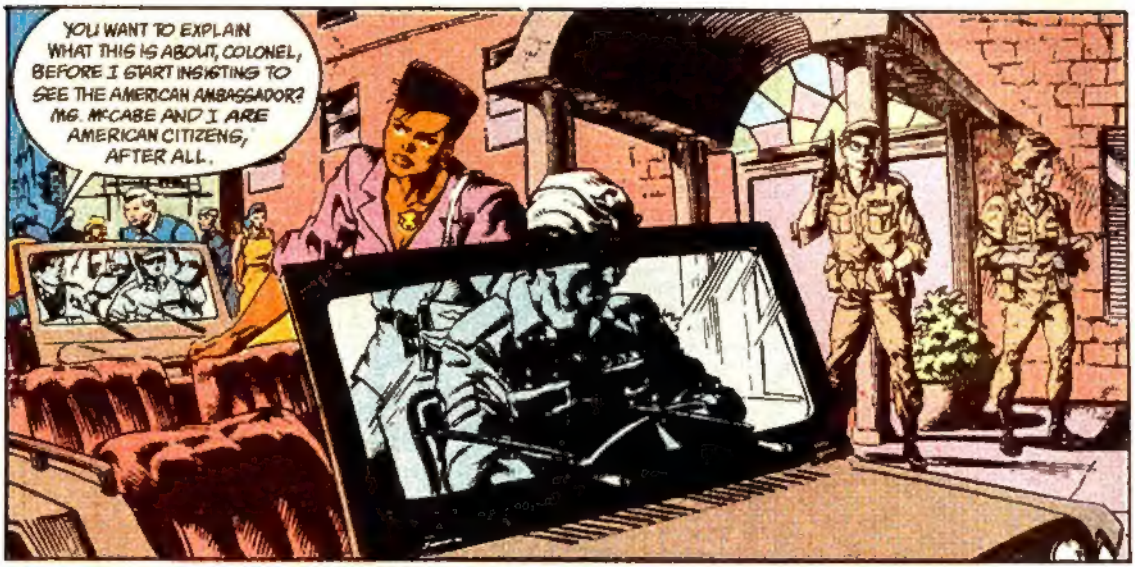

LET ME GET MY PURSE

I TRUST YOUR PASSPORTS ARE HANDY AND IN ORDER?


MAKE LIKE A FLEA HIDE BEHIND MY EAR TH S IS TROUBLE
IS IT TOO LATE TO RENEGOTIATE OUR DEAL?

LET MY MAN CHECK THE CONTENTS OF THE BAG.

AFTER YOU, LADIES...
217
ONLY THE USUAL FEMALE DEBRIS, COLONEL.


YOU WANT TO EXPLAIN WHAT THIS IS ABOUT, COLONEL, BEFORE I START INSISTING TO SEE THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR? MS. McCABE AND I ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS, AFTER ALL.

I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU, MRS. WALLER.
I AM THE MOSSAD'S LIAISON WITH THE HAYOTH, SO I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU AND YOUR "SUICIDE SQUAD." I CAN ASSURE YOU.

WHAT I DON'T KNOW -- YET -- IS WHY YOU ARE IN ISRAEL, ALTHOUGH I SUSPECT IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS KOBRA AND HIS THREATS MADE RECENTLY.
KOBRA? KOBRA'S DEAD. CAPTAIN ATOM KILLED HIM.

OH PLEASE. WE ALL KNOW BETTER THAN THAT. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SENT YOU HERE TO -- "HELP" US, NU?
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MY BEING HERE. I'M A SIMPLE TOURIST. MS. McCABE IS A MODEL, HERE FOR A FASHION SHOOT.

YES. I'M CERTAIN.
THEN IT WOULD BE OF NO INTEREST TO YOU THAT THE HAYOTH ALREADY ENCOUNTERED KOBRA.
DID THEY? AND WHAT HAPPENED?

THEY DID WHAT ISRAELIS ALWAYS DO, MRS. WALLER.

THEY WON.

NEXT: STONE WALLS, IRON BARS

SUICIDE NOTES

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I really hate coming attractions. Not all coming attractions, just the ones that tell you plot details and surprise endings. MAN, do those drive me up the wall! If you ever see a grown man in a movie theatre with his eyes screwed shut and his fingers in his ears during a film trailer, it's probably me.

So it's for that reason that I ask you guys to always read the story before you read the column. I know most of you already do that, but there are still some hold-outs who insist on knowing what happens in the issue after the one they're holding that they still haven't read yet.

Mind you, if you want to know what's going to happen two months ahead of time, be my guest! But don't say I didn't warn you.

That is all.

Here are some comments on SUICIDE SQUAD #42, part three of "The Phoenix Gambit."

Dear Suicidals:

Three issues into "The Phoenix Gambit" and this story just keeps getting better and better! Talk about subplots! How can this story end in only one more issue?

Page 5, panel 3: In the words of Blue Beetle, "Hey, everybody! Batman made a funny! Batman made a funny!" Watch out, that's his third joke in the past four years. Keep it up and people will think he's not a "grim avenger of the night" anymore!

Vertigo's been reading too much Shakespeare again, hasn't he? He thinks he's Hamlet. Let the Suicide Squad bail him out of this mess in one piece.

Why do I get the feeling that that wasn't Batman on the roof with Bolshoi? Because Batman wouldn't have been caught. Best bet is that Boomerbutt was under the cowl. After all, who else vomits in comics?

In conclusion, I ask the same question I asked at the end of my letter last month. You wouldn't really have Deadshot kill Amanda, would you? Hmm...

Julio Diaz
8713 Linda Court
Tampa, FL 33604

Not this time, Julio.

*****

Dear Suicide Scribes,

Issues #41 and 42 were excellent. You've done some things I expected and some I didn't.

A million bucks a case seems awfully costly: I don't think Uncle Sam will go for it for very long. Perhaps Amanda will lower her price somewhat when she realizes this. Other points of interest: Is the Wild Huntsman going to be used, or is his subplot now discarded? Will the Squad's more international status require them to have more than one base in more than one part of the world? Will Ravan ever have it out with Kobra?

Issue #41's scenes with Captain Boomerang were absolutely hilarious! He is an institution in this title, and I would be sorely disappointed to ever see him go permanently. The same goes for artist Geof Isherwood. I really enjoyed his work on Marvel's Conan the King, and here it's even better. Keep it up, Geof!

This title is as strong as it's ever been, and the new direction is fresh and exciting--I'm really into it. Thanks.

Scott R. Pyle
IUP
214 Wallace Hall
Indiana, PA 15705

No plans for the Wild Huntsman, Scott, but if it's a Ravan/Kobra confrontation you're after,you've come to the right place. Stay tuned, but don't sit so close to the book when you read it; you could be injured. Heh.

*****

Dear Dan,
Re: Suicide Squad #42

Yet another beautifully crafted tale of international espionage from the team of John Ostrander and Kim Yale. In my opinion, John and Kim are two of the premier writers in comics today, and it's stories such as "The Phoenix Gambit" that prove the truth of that statement.

The art this issue wasn't as tight as last issue because of the inks. Mr. Isherwood is an excellent artist as long as he inks his own pencils, so I would suggest letting him do so.

Boomerang impersonating Batman was an excellent touch of irony. Great job, guys (and girl).

The best part of this issue for me was the appearance of Deadshot. I've long liked his character and have really been enjoying his use here in the Squad. Please, keep him around.

Well, I haven't got much to say this time, so keep up the good work and I'll see you in 30.

Sincerely,
Marson Fedrick
Route One, Box 615
Waynesboro, MS 39367

Thanks, Marson, but I think this Kobra three-parter (#45-47) has even more of that international thriller feel to it. Not to mention scorpions.

*****

Dear Dan, Kim, and John,

"Odd. I somehow thought Batman would have a stronger stomach."

Ah, you clever devils. It only took me three re-readings of issue #42 before it clicked. Something had seemed out of place, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Then, I spotted the clues. Batman's peculiar silence; his use of the "bat-a-rang"; that familiar sound effect on the bottom of page 21 (used by a member of our illustrious cast during the Nightshade Odyssey); and the big clue--Amanda's statement to Digger Harkness--"You have a special part to play, Down Under. One I'm sure you will enjoy."

I could only arrive at one conclusion: "Batman" was actually a disguised Captain Boomerang. But, why? I can't quite figure that one out, unless Amanda wants Kaligari to believe Batman has been captured when he really hasn't; however, I have trouble seeing Boomerbutt going along with such an idea. Interesting, yet perplexing. And, I suppose I'll have to wait impatiently for next month's installment for the answers.

I hope Poison Ivy plays a more important role in the finale than she has since this storyline began. She's a force to be reckoned with, but so far hasn't quite shown her true potential to the Squad, except for issue #39, which spotlighted her talents for too short a time. An interest-

ing idea would be for her to set her sights on Count Vertigo. That pair would make quite an awesome team. But, even if she doesn't take a liking to Werner, it shouldn't be too much longer before she latches onto someone.

So far, I've really enjoyed "The Phoenix Gambit," but of course, I'll reserve my final judgment until I see the last chapter. I have this aching suspicion that a very unexpected death will occur. Perhaps somebody with an Aussie accent? Issue #44's title, "Grave Matters," doesn't help much to dispel those thoughts.

On the whole, I'm hoping to see a few new faces in the Squad after this story is over, more emphasis on Bronze Tiger's internal struggles, a trip back to Belle Reve to see what's up with a few of our recently departed supporting cast members, and the conflict between Kobra and Ravan resolved once and for all.

Take care. I'll be talking to you again soon.

A sincere fan,
David J. Harrington
210½ Broadway
Fort Edward, NY 12828

Good call on Ivy putting her hooks into Count Vertigo, David. We'll be looking them up next month. And while Boomerang survived through #44, it remains to be seen whether Deadshot will let him survive missing their flight. And, yes, we'll be getting to everything else you request. And I do mean everything.

*****

To: Squad Command
From: Concerned American Citizen
Re: Mission Objectives Review--
THE PHOENIX GAMBIT

STORY:

Twists and turns have been handled very nicely, and the politics of the situation keep any one group from being entirely "pure" or "good" in this drama. Great motivation for bringing the cast back together. Even Batman's appearance is well justified (any chance of his quitting the Joke League International?) It was great to see him actually overpowered. I'm getting a little tired of Bats's attitude about his own indestructibility and perfection. Like most of the rest of the Squad, he is only human, and can be hurt. As of part 3, I am still completely in the dark as to how you are going to pull off a wrap-up in one issue. I only hope that it doesn't spell a permanent end to Count Vertigo (which is what usually happens to characters who get spotlighted in this book).

ART:

For me, the jury is still out on Isherwood. He definitely captures the dark and grim atmosphere of the book, but he seems to do it best when he inks his own pencils. For some reason the art seems sketchy when someone else does the inks. It fits the new "non-costume" realistic tone being set, although I think I still favor the roller-coaster ride effect given us by Miehm and Kesel.

PLOT THREADS:

You're doing a good job with the characters that you chose to deal with, but what about the missing supporting cast? Are we never to hear from that intriguing setup at Belle Reve again (including Father Cramer, Murph, Stekofsky, Kale, Economos...et al.?) What about Punch and Jewelee and their little "blessed event"? I don't think any other magazine is going to continue giving us Nightshade in action (or King Faraday, for that matter). Whatever happened to Nemesis? Will Oracle be in on the all-new fun and games (seems like she would be indispensable now that the Squad will no longer have a full base setup to operate from. They could use all the outside support they can get!)

And what happened to you normally plug-happy guys in the editorial department? Not a word to us about Kobra's escape and seeming demise in CAPTAIN ATOM #40. Worse yet, you neglected to say anything about the special guest appearance of Col. Richard Flag in CAPTAIN ATOM #42 (yes, it's true, not a flashback or imaginary story, either!!! My thanks to that team for finally giving an unjustly treated character the finale he deserved!). Anyway, John is usually a little more on top of things than this. I'm assuming that the supporting roles are being shunted aside while we get things rolling with Phoenix Gambit. Once this is over I would expect most of these plots to be addressed.

OVERALL:

FANTASTIC! This book is still one of the most unconventional, unpredictable, and fun titles to read, ever!!

Until the Wall loses
50 pounds,

Kent Silveira
21901 Almaden Avenue
Monta Vista, CA 95014

You're right, Kent. I dropped the ball on plugging CAPTAIN ATOM #40 and #42 for the events you mentioned. But here's my chance to make up for it: Punch and Jewelee will be making a brief appearance in HAWK AND DOVE #18. As for everyone else, the Squad won't return to the U.S.A. until #48.

*****

Dear Dan,

With SUICIDE SQUAD #42, the international possibilities of the team are coming into focus.

The members of the team seem to belong together. I wonder what will be the glue that keeps them together in the future.

Until next issue...

Melissa Page
236 New Salem Loop
Nortonville, KY 42442

Good question, Melissa. Keep reading.

*****

Squaddies,

Looks like this new "Phoenix Gambit" is shaping up quite well. I have to wonder, even though the Squad does get rid of Vertigo, how will the Vlatavan unrest be quieted? The Squad doesn't have diplomatic immunity (that I know of), and can't kill Kaligari (though try telling that to the Wall). One thing: I don't think anyone will miss Kaligari, but it will cause an international incident.

On another note, I don't see what will be accomplished by Captain Boomerang posing as Batman. That was him, wasn't it? If so, where's Batman?

And exactly what's the stake that William Hell has in all this? I presume that was him on the last page of issue #41.

Unfortunately, all this change has robbed the book, for me, of one of its most attractive points: the revolving membership policy. Even though there will be little chance, I implore you to induct some or all of these characters as new members: Black Orchid, Catwoman, Speedy, Bloodsport, Mark Shaw, and Barbara Gordon.

Gordon Lyons
6418 Cottonwood Drive
Alexandria, VA 22310

Gordon, we'll be dealing with the Vlatavan question starting in #48 and continuing for the next several issues after that on and off. And since all your questions were answered in #43, I'll conclude this column by saying that with the exception of Bloodsport, John, Kim, and I have discussed bringing in each of the characters you mentioned. Especially the last one. And we mentioned bringing her in in SUICIDE SQUAD #48 as well. More on Barbara Gordon/Oracle later.

Life is but a NEXT ISSUE BOX:

We catch up with Poison Ivy and the drugged Count Vertigo, and we meet Dybbuk, the Israeli artificial intelligence. Plus more about Hayoth and the new Atom (I mentioned scorpions, didn't I?). And Kobra? Wait till you get a whiff of his master plan--it's a knockout.

See you then.

--Dan Raspler
Ridin' shotgun down
the Kali Yuga